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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Special Committee on Preferences
Intergovernmental Group of Experts
on Rules of Origin
First session
Geneva, 19 July 1995
Item 2 of the provisional agenda

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

Note by the UNCTAD secretariat

I. PROVISIONAL AGENDA

1. Election of officers

2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Consultations on harmonization of the rules of origin

4. Consultations on simplification and improvement of the rules of origin

5. Other business

6. Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Rules of Origin.

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II. ANNOTATIONS TO THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA

Item 1: Election of officers

The Intergovernmental Group of Experts, as a subsidiary body of the Special Committee on Preferences, elects its own officers. Following past practice, the Intergovernmental Group may wish to elect a Chairman and a Vice-Chairman-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda

The Intergovernmental Group may wish to adopt the provisional agenda which has been drawn up in accordance with the decision of the Special Committee on Preferences at its twenty-first session and is set out in section I above.

Item 3: Consultations on harmonization of the rules of origin

At its twenty-first session, the Special Committee adopted the following text on preparations for the 1995 policy review on the GSP (TD/B/SCP/10, annex I, para. 1):

> "The Special Committee on Preferences recommends to the Trade and Development Board that, as part of the preparation for the 1995 policy review, an Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Rules of Origin be established with the following terms of reference: To make proposals to the Special Committee, in view of the policy review on the GSP in 1995, on the simplification, harmonization and improvement of the rules of origin."

With a view to facilitating the tasks of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts, the secretariat has prepared a study on "Options and proposals for harmonization, simplification and improvement of the rules of origin" (TD/B/SCP/AC.1/2) and a "Summary of replies received from preference-giving and preference-receiving countries to the questionnaire prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat" (TD/B/SCP/AC.1/2/Add.1). The study first updates the current status of GSP rules of origin and their ancillary rules and offers suggestions on how to develop a harmonized set of rules of origin for GSP purposes. It analyses the Uruguay Round Agreement on Rules of Origin and the "Common Declaration on Preferential Rules of Origin" as they relate to GSP rules of origin. It also examines the work to be carried out by the Technical Committee, established under the World Customs Organization, to develop a harmonized set of non-preferential rules of origin based on the change of tariff heading criteria. It highlights the similarities between such work and the aims of the GSP schemes and their rules of origin and proposes possible actions to be undertaken in connection with the work to be carried out by the Technical Committee.

Item 4: Consultations on simplification and improvement of the rules of origin

The above-mentioned study (TD/B/SCP/AC.1/2) contains specific proposals for the improvement and simplification of the rules of origin based on findings and suggestions put forward by preference-receiving countries in their replies to the questionnaire on rules of origin. It suggests, inter alia, the updating of the notes on the back of Form A. In addition, it proposes more lenient rules of transhipment for LDCs and land-locked countries and the implementation of the undertakings contained in the "Common Declaration on Preferential Rules of Origin", in particular the binding origin information. It also highlights possible ways to improve rules of origin in the framework of cumulative origin provided under the schemes of some preference-giving countries.

Item 5: Other business

Item 6: Adoption of the report of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Rules of Origin

The report of the Intergovernmental Group will be submitted to the Special Committee on Preferences at its twenty-second session.